

Delays coming for two highways

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Motorists southbound on Del. 1 and U.S. 13 should expect traffic snarls near Odessa later this month when the Delaware Department of Transportation detours traffic from both highways onto a single, one-lane stretch of road.

For three days, road workers will reduce Del. 1 south to one lane of traffic south of the Appoquinimink River where the road merges with U.S. 13, project manager David Duke said.

At the same time, the department will force southbound drivers on U.S. 13 to get on Del. 1 in Odessa, at the Del. 299 intersection.

The three-day detour is expected to happen during the week of April 29, weather permitting, Duke said.

The detour is part of the final phase of the Del. 1 project, which will create a toll expressway running from just south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal toward the state's beaches.

Transportation officials are urging motorists to use alternate routes, such as Del. 9 or Del. 71.

"It's not going to be pretty unless people find alternate routes," Duke said. "We're doing our best to minimize traffic impact, but with a project like this

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it's hard."

None of the changes will affect northbound traffic on either Del. 1 or U.S. 13.

During the detour, the only people who will be allowed on U.S. 13 south of Del. 299 are people who live off the road, or are visiting businesses there, department spokesman Mike Williams said.

Both Del. 1 and U.S. 13 carry tens of thousands of vehicles each day, Williams said. According to traffic counts, an average of 18,880 vehicles cross Odessa's northern town limit on U.S. 13 each day. Nearly 43,000 vehicles drive past Pine Tree Corner Road on the combined Del. 1/U.S. 13 daily.

The three-day detour will usher in a traffic pattern change that will affect southbound drivers on U.S. 13 for about a year, Williams said.

Under the new pattern, those drivers would continue on U.S. 13 south on a new stretch of road that stops at Pine Tree Corner Road. Motorists would then rejoin Del. 1, Williams said.

Transportation officials are concerned traffic will

Upcoming detours

For 3 days



1: Southbound U.S. 13 will be detoured onto Del. 299 and Del. 1.

2: At the point Del. 1 southbound rejoins U.S. 13, it will be reduced to one lane up to Noxontown Rd.

For 1 year



3: Southbound U.S. 13 traffic will have the option to be detoured onto an access road up to Pine Tree Rd. or take Del. 299.

The News Journal

back up near U.S. 13 and Pine Tree Corner Road.

Williams said they hope drivers will choose to continue leaving U.S. 13 south in Odessa for Del. 1. People who get on or off Del. 1 at Del. 299 do not have to pay a toll, he said.

Businesses along that stretch of U.S. 13 say they have seen business decline since the Del. 1 project started. "Everyone's going to use Route 1 now," said Nick Kledaras, owner of the Hearth Restaurant. "And what's worse, no one is coming off of Route 1 to eat breakfast here."

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